



260 Creative Ideas
& Teaching Tips
For Story Time
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260 Teaching Tips and Creative Ideas For Story Time ☺

By Diane L. Henderson

1. I tie whatever book I'm reading with a beautiful rainbow ribbon. I ask the children why they think I did this. "Reading is a GIFT that we give our selves. We can go anywhere, and be anything we want, when we read a book." Reading is a FUN-tastic adventure!
2. I tell my students we are going on a magic carpet ride. So hold on tight because here we go.
3. Because we are on a reading adventure, traveling all over the world--I sometimes put my puppets, props and stories that I will be reading in a small suitcase, or rectangular wicker picnic basket. This adds to the excitement and fits in with the theme of going places while reading! You could buy or make country/state stickers and paste them on your suitcase.
4. Another fun thing to do that tie in with this is to have the children make a "passport". I Xerox our class picture so I have a black and white photo of each student. They glue this to their passport. A tri-fold passport is fun. I use card stock. Each time we go "somewhere" we take out our passports out and I stamp them with our latest destination. You could use stickers, or the children could write the country, city or whatever on an appropriate section of their passport.
5. I have a "Globe" beach ball as well. This is fun to toss to the children and have them "find" where we are off to. A class map could also be "starred" with a sticker to show that we've been to Egypt or wherever. It's a great way to incorporate a little geography with reading.
6. I pass out "train tickets" to use as bookmarks. We are "all aboard" for a great reading adventure. I have a train complete with an engine, caboose and cars. Each time we finish a book I write the title on a brightly colored "shape" and it becomes part of the cargo in the freight cars! I also have a train whistle that I blow to announce that it's time to sit and listen.
7. To get my students hooked on the concept of reading I want them to know that they can do anything, be anything, go anywhere when

they open up a book. To hook them, I might start out with a fish pole that has a magnet on the end. I have a bunch of plastic fish with magnets on them that I pass out to the children. I tell them I want them to get hooked on reading. I'm going to go fishing to see who's going to get hooked on a book. I dangle my line and they attach their fish. I'll pick a quiet child to take the fish off and put it in the bucket. As a math extension, we'll count the fish. On days that I do this I'll be reading fish or ocean stories.

8. A children's xylophone is fun when you have a musical book, or a book about a birthday. I have no musical background, but I can follow numbers. I designate notes with numbers and label my "musical keyboard instruments." Many children's songbooks are set up this way, and are very easy to follow.
9. Fill a "misting" bottle with water and label it "Splash". I mist my students when I read water stories. It is refreshing especially when it's hot outside. No one really gets wet, because unlike a squirt gun, it's a gentle mist.
10. Real goldfish are just 15c at Meijers. They are a fun way to jazz up an ocean tale or *Rainbow Fish* stories. I do a simple magic trick with a "mirror glass". The glass is filled with water, the mirror is in the center, and the fish are in the back. You cover the glass, pull out the mirror as you remove the silk covering, and wahla, you have 3 little fish swimming in a glass of water. Give the fish to your students and you have a memorable story time with less than a dollar invested.
11. Along the same lines blowing bubbles with stories like Mercer Mayer's *Magic Bubbles* enhances the reading. Many stores sell a glycerin bubble wand for \$2.50. These bubbles after 10 seconds will not easily pop and can even be held! These bubbles stay awhile and even stick to the ceiling and floor without popping for a long time! Even if you don't have a bubble story you could still incorporate blowing bubbles as a fun interactive go-along with a summer tale. Bubbles are inexpensive and you can recycle the wands each year so you can have enough for each child. The 25 in-a-pack for weddings are perfect!
12. Silly string is also a fun thing to "squirt" around after appropriate stories. Follow directions on can for safety precautions.
13. Elongated balloons make terrific inexpensive finger puppets. Pass out black fine tip markers to add eyes, noses and whiskers for animal "faces" or make "people-heads" too. Great for snakes,

worms, and caterpillars. Glue on some wings and you have a butterfly or a dragonfly!

14. Glue some wiggle eyes to the pages of your animal or people books to enhance them. I did this to Dr. Seuss' story *The Eye Book*.
15. I also **paint** wiggle eyes different colors and glue them on my bug puppets. They add dimension and the little eye inside acts as a noisemaker. I painted some brown, added them to a stuffed dog and now I have "Spot", I painted some black, added them to a red beetle and turned it into a ladybug. I Velcro'd some large ones painted gray, and attach them to a boy puppet when I read Max Lacado's "Dot" story, & *The Wemmick's* from his anthology *Tell Me The Secrets*.
16. A "follow-along" finger puppet is a great comprehension/listening aid. (The puppet peeks out of the top of the book to signal an oral repetitive response from the children.) If the story has a repetitive sound, word or phrase in it I have the students say that. Sometimes a phrase repeats like "Me Too." in the book *Me Too* by Mercer Meyer whose little sister always wants to tag along, or the phrase "Then I'll do it all by myself" from the *Little Red Hen*. Children repeat the sentence chorally, each time my little finger puppet peeks out. (This gets them involved, adds interactive fun, and aids in listening skills and timing.)
17. No finger puppet? Goofy pencils with crazy tops work well, or cut and laminate something and glue it to a Popsicle stick. After-Winter sales are great for buying children's knit gloves. Snip off the "fingers and thumb" and you have a finger puppet for each child. Glue wiggle eyes on and use as a worm, caterpillar, snake etc. Buy an assortment of colors and have sets of rainbow-colored puppets for each child to wear during rainbow or color stories. When you get to a specific color they hold up that wiggly worm. ☺
18. Multi-colored gloves are also available. (A different color for each finger) are terrific to wear during story time. They have Toe socks on the same order.
 - ❖ You can Velcro numbers to each finger and count with the children.
 - ❖ You can put a piece of Velcro on the top center of your gloved-hand, and the reverse Velcro on any "bugs" you have that you want to help "fly". Velcro the bug to the glove and away you go.

- Get a black pair of gloves and snip one finger off and sew it to the other glove. You now have 6 “legs” for those types of insects.
- ❖ Snip the fingers off, roll the ragged hem, and glue; add some wiggle eyes and you have 10 finger puppets for the price of a dollar! (The Dollar store carries a great color-assortment of knit gloves.)
 - ❖ Get 3 pair of green gloves, snip the fingers, add the wiggle eyes and everyone has a “hungry-hungry caterpillar”; add some Velcro wings and now you have a butterfly! Caution children to be careful of the wiggle eyes or they will fall off. When applying them, use a big dollop of glue. Keep some extra ones handy should a few get lost. Wal-Mart has tiny wooden ladybugs that look cute glued to the top of the caterpillar (out for a ride).
 - ❖ Beige work gloves can also be snipped. They make great “people” finger puppets. The nice thing about these gloves is that you can decorate and color them with magic markers! Use yarn to add “hair”.
 - ❖ I have my own bag of ready-made finger puppets for my students to use for a particular story, but I also give them each a “finger” to decorate so that they have their own to keep in their desk and use whenever a situation arises.
19. Wear floral or printed garden gloves when you tell a garden/flower story. You can hold up a child’s plastic shovel or other garden tool as a story aid/prompt/prop.
20. Put a sock on your hand that you have designed to look like the hungry caterpillar. Give each child a laminated construction paper piece of “food” that the caterpillar has eaten. If you cut a hole in the food you can slip them on your “caterpillar wrist” like a bracelet and eat a way, as you wander from child to child. Have them tell you what comes next in the eating sequence.
21. A similar thing can be done with the nutty “sandwich” books. Laminate tag board-size pieces of bread etc. and collect them from the students as you make the sandwich and tell the story.
22. *The Little Old Lady Who Swallowed a Spider* is another great “prop” story. Make a large head of a little old lady with a big circle cut out as her mouth. Laminate pictures children have drawn and colored or that you have collected from books. Have children put them into her mouth. You could also use 3-dimensional plastic animals. Attach a shoebox, baggie, or manila envelope to the back with Velcro so that something will “catch” the pieces as they fall. This can also be used as storage for your pieces.

23. Keep a clothespin handy when you're reading chapter books. It's a great way to mark your page. Sometimes books fall and a bookmark gets lost.
24. Two clothespins are a great way to keep a story open to a particular page while you go over pictures or text with children, your hand remain free and the book remains open.
25. A clothespin can also be hot glued to a prop. If you have a lot of laminated characters, instead of gluing them to a Popsicle stick, glue them to a clothespin. Clip all the clothespins to a paint stick that lies in your lap. When you need that "character" it's easy to find. I sometimes clip my clothespins to my felt board, or cardboard displayer while I tell the story.
26. If the clothespin's spring is not too tight you can even clip them to your finger and use as a puppet. A piece of felt lessens the pressure and the puppet stays on your finger, just incase you want to do dives, and summersaults with them. (Such as a bug flying, or a frog or bunny hopping)
27. Name cards that you can fold to make a "tent" are great "flash cards" Cut the tents in half and laminate them. Keep a pack handy by your storytelling chair along with a dry erase marker. You can print whatever words or concept you are trying to reinforce in the story, and then wash them after the story-lesson. For stories you tell all the time, keep a pack of pre-written and laminated cards in an envelope tucked inside the book. I have the design on the "tent-cards" correspond with the story. To cut the cost just use colored index cards. This is great to reinforce, letters, numbers, colors, opposites, sight and word-wall words, etc. Definitions of setting, character, homonym, alliteration, onomatopoeia, etc can also be done.
28. Cut pieces of cardboard into 5x7 shapes. (The cardboard that comes as a backing for printed-paper works perfectly; simply cut in half.) Fold sheets of black construction paper in half. Insert cardboard inside black paper. Give each child a scrap of terry cloth and a piece of chalk. Have students keep their "portable chalkboard" in a baggy inside their desks. If you know they will need to write something during story time tell them to come to the community circle with their blackboard baggies! Children love these; they can use them over and over. Paper can be used front or back, and then flipped over for an even fresher start. When terry cloth gets too dust-laden, wash in the sink and wring out.

29. Another “writing with reading” activity that the children love is the “magic erase” boards. These are the old-fashioned black waxy backed ones where you lift a sheet of transparency and the writing is erased. You can buy packs of 8 at the ½ Off Card Shops for \$1.50. I bought enough to pass out to each child when I’m reading a story where I want them to learn a specific thing. Perhaps I’m introducing a new vocabulary word, so they write it down on their little boards. There are many things you can do with them. “Who do you think took the cookie?” (Ask a question and have children write down their answer. List the options on your board.) When you’ve finished reading, have children show their answers.
30. There’s a new “toy” on the market called Giggle Writer by Ohio Art. It works like the “magic erase” boards, but has some sort of liquid-gel inside. When you shake it to make the words erase the object giggles. Because I tell a lot of monkey stories my “object” is a monkey.
31. You can make your own “Giggle Writer” by putting a jar of tinted hair gel into a small Ziploc. Glue the bag to a cardboard backing of a drawing of an animal or other object. It won’t giggle, but the kids will.
32. Writing things down during a story could also be done with an “Etch-a-sketch”. Anything you bring to story hour that makes reading fun, different and entertaining simply enhances learning.
33. I also have a storyboard made out of a huge white plastic cutting board. It has a handle so it looks like a big paddle. I laminate a picture book and then Velcro each page on top of the others--on top of my paddle. I also have words, colors, ABC’s and 1,2,3’s etc that I hold up and the children identify before, during, or after a story.
34. Check out the headers that are on top of the plastic package of bulletin board decorations that you buy. Most companies have a running picture in miniature of the larger contents. These are perfect laminated and glued on Popsicle sticks for manipulatives, or items to put in or produce in a change bag.
35. I have certain stories that I’ve acquired over the Internet or by word of mouth and they are just a script. A fun way to store these is to roll them up and insert them in fabric-covered empty toilet paper rolls. Have students choose a brightly colored “scroll story” from your basket and read it to them. Older students could

take turns reading them aloud to the other children as well. This could be done with story starters as a writing assignment, after you have introduced the project via reading a story.

36. A nice way to introduce children to poetry is through these fabric-covered rolls. Insert your favorite thematic or seasonal poems in the tubes. Whenever I'm done reading a story I have a child choose a poem to read; or have older students read them. I have all sorts of favorite poems that really don't come in one particular book or with pictures. This is a neat way to read them. I laminate my pages, and sometimes have a picture glued to the back. While I am reading the poem students are looking at the picture. I have a basket of Shel Silverstein's poems for certain months especially Halloween. These rolls are covered in black and orange Halloween print. To cover a roll simply put a line of glue along the cardboard roll, put the fabric strip on the glue and roll, secure the other end with another line of glue. Put some glue on the inside of the end tips as well, and fold the fabric inside so you have a nice hemmed roll. The paper poem sticks out just enough to easily pull it out.
37. During the month of February I have several poems written on paper hearts that I have glued to a ribbon. I pull them out of a heart-shaped candy box or other Valentine container. Besides some traditional Valentine stories I also have a theme of love, hugs, kisses, friendship etc. *The Kissing Hand* and *The Jolly Postman* are two great stories to read. As an extension to the story have children go back to their desks and write a Love Note, poem or send some hugs and kisses.
38. *Abraham Lincoln's Whiskers* is also another great February story. It's a true story about a little girl who writes a letter to the president telling him he'd look good in a beard. The president writes back! My students were amazed that our president would write a letter back to a child. We took a "heads down" vote of how many thought that our president would write us back. More students felt that he would not. As a class we wrote a letter to our then President Clinton. He did write back! Of course his PR committee did it, but the children were thrilled. The White House sent an autographed picture of the president, his pets, and the vice president, two letters and enough stickers for the entire class that said "I wrote the president and he wrote back." We made buttons to wear with the stickers. It took about 6 weeks to hear from him. Mr. Lincoln replied with a handwritten note within the week, and followed it up with a personal visit! How times have changed. Since

this writing we did receive letters from President Bush, but none from President Obama.

39. Make and read a canned story! Similar to the above are my Pringle Can stories. Here's how:

- Clean out a Pringles can and cover it with fabric.
- Take matching fabric and cut a long strip
- Type up your story in large pica with a tad smaller margin than your material strip.
- Trim your column story to fit on the material strip.
- Using clear Contac paper stick the story to your wrong side of the material.
- Using a zig zag stitch and bright colored thread, sew the edges of the story on to the fabric. (Yes you can sew paper! I use a wide and long stitch.)
- Center, and hot glue the end of the story to the seam of the Pringles can, so that when you roll the story, the words will be hidden and the fabric will show nicely on the outside of the can.
- Roll your scroll story around the can.
- Fasten with a Velcro dot
- I put a circular cutout of the fabric along with a typed title on the lid.
- Cut up or scan any pictures that go with the story.
- Glue them to corresponding colored construction paper and...
- Laminate. (I used a deep blue cloud material and then used royal blue paper for mounting.)
- I number the pieces and put the corresponding number on the paragraph of my scrolled story.
- Pass out the pieces to the children.
- When you begin paragraph 2 with picture #2 say: "Who has picture #2?" They put it on the flannel board and you continue reading.
- Keep all your canned stories in one place. This is just another fun way to read a story other than booking it! It's also something you can do with books that are duplicates, too tiny, or really worn.

40. Tape some of your stories to send home as a "special treat" for "special students." This is wonderful to do if you have a child who will be out ill or on a family trip for a long time. They can listen to the tapes in bed or in the car. Everyone can put a "get well", or "we miss you" message on another tape as well.

41. Ever wonder what you can do with those “free” CD’s for Internet service that you get in the mail? Save them and type a story on them. Attach pictures and text to the non-shiny side. Put a piece of Velcro on the back and use on your flannel board. Or make up enough so that all of your students can read/share one. Put each letter of the alphabet or numbers on them. Write a science fiction tale on your “flying saucer”, glue a Popsicle stick to one and have a puppet. Use your imagination!
42. I wrote one of my favorite alphabet books ***A My Name Is Alice*** by Jane Bayer on 27 CD’s. One for each letter of the alphabet plus the title disc. I glued two CD’s together so I had two shiny sides and didn’t have to mess around with cutting paper circles to cover the printing on the flip side. On one side is the letter verse on the other is the capital as well as the lowercase letter. I pass them out and students stand up and read their disc in alphabetical order.
- ❖ Later I can say who ever has a vowel/consonant please hold up your disc. You can review all kinds of information.
 - ❖ How about having children/letters combine with each other and make a word to share with the class?
 - ❖ You could also pass out additional discs and have students write a parody of the story. I.e., studying plants? D my name is daffodil and my sister’s name is Dandelion. She’s a weed and I’m a flower. Etc.
43. Have students write and illustrate a story on a window shade, or make up some of your own from favorite books. For easy storage, fasten with a rubber band and keep your “shady stories” in an umbrella stand. These are great for having students read along. Use a flashlight, magic wand, feather duster, toy light-up laser, or cute pointer stick to point to each word.
44. Many books are about counting, colors or the alphabet. I make pictures to go along with whatever the lesson may be, laminate them, and then while I’m reading I put them up on my flannel board. For example *Mittens* by Jean Warren, is a great go-along with the nursery rhyme “Three Little Kittens Who Lost Their Mittens.” How about this twist: The kittens find one that’s blue in a shoe, one that’s red under the bed etc. I cut out mittens from construction paper and have students choose which one the story is talking about. We also match the colored mitten up with the color word. Later in *Six Little Mittens* we go from colors to counting. I start with 6 mittens and as we read we take away whatever number the page says, and then figure out how many mittens we

have left. There are endless possibilities for many stories. The teacher stores have cut outs already done, or you could also use an Ellison die-cut machine.

45. I don't keep the paper jacket covers on my hardback books. They are easily torn and make the books look old and worn. Instead, I cut them up and laminate them for either a picture to put on my flannel board to introduce the story, a clue that I place in the hall or room, or I glue it on a paint stick and use it as a manipulative to raise when I want the children to repeat something.

46. Challenge your students to READ Instead of watch TV. Here's how to run an "I'm Unplugged" TV challenge week:

- Have a discussion about the importance of reading.
- As a math extension, discuss how much TV we watch, how many hours in a day we watch TV and then convert that to a week's time, graph the results.
- Each student decides how much TV time they will commit to giving up as their personal goal.
- Compute this to hours in a week and make another graph.
- Add the extra incentive to try and give it up entirely!
- Offer a special prize for this.
- Discuss alternatives to watching TV. I add that I want them to read anything for at least one hour of their "free" time.
- Present your TV challenge with great enthusiasm.
- Send a note home to the parents with a nightly sheet to sign.
- Design and wear "unplugged TV" buttons/badges. Make them in such a way that other children will ask about the button so your students can enthusiastically share what they are doing.
- Challenge the principal or another class to participate.
- Write and sign a personal commitment contract,
- Write and say a class pledge.
- At the end-of-the-week tally up the final results. Do the math extensions and compare/contrast.
- Anyone who met his or her goal gets a certificate or other incentive,
- The student(s) who gave up TV for an entire week gets a special prize,
- The class as a whole gets to do an art project, play a game, have a popcorn party etc.
- Write an announcement or article for the school newspaper of your class's success!
- Discuss what students did with their "unplugged" time, what they learned, what they liked and did not like, was this frustrating, hard, were they tempted?
- Let students share some of the great things they read.

-Take a vote to see if they would like to do this again at the end of the year, and try to beat their record?

47. I use my digital camera to take pictures of my students doing various activities. I laminate them, and later use these “real people” in a story I’m reading. They are great as a “surprise” character extension on a flannel board too!
48. I found a child’s spider costume that was too small for me. I simply cut off the sleeves with these wonderfully flowing orange spider web cuffs. Instead of an entire costume I just put the sleeves on like a pair of gloves. They stay on with ponytail scrunchies. I cut the cool collar off and sewed it on a black sheet (a table cloth works too) Add a few ribbons for ties and you have a great costume. The cape’s great for Dracula, a wicked witch or whatever. It hides the fact that my sleeves do not go all the way up. So, even if something isn’t your size, doesn’t mean you can’t use parts of it!
49. A bath mitten makes a great puppet. Many of them are shaped like animals and are brightly colored. They are durable and inexpensive.
50. Potholder mitts often have cute animal shapes on them that make a great puppet too! I just bought one with a full-body red dog on it, perfect for my Clifford stories! Many licensed characters like Pooh and Mickey Mouse are often on washcloths and towels as well, a few stitches and you have a puppet
51. Look for good condition large-sized blue jeans at garage sales. Cut off the legs and sew up the bottom and you have a great book bag. If you want, cut a long strip from the legs and you have a handle. I choose my books for the week ahead of time, and put them in the bag. They hang handily on the back of my reading chair. I also found a humungus pair and did the same thing. I keep my big books and one of my flannel boards in that bag! Leave plain, or decorate the front with puffy paint and fabric cutouts etc.
52. I can’t afford to buy every book that I want, especially seasonal ones that I may read only once a year. I sometimes memorize these and tell them orally and act them out rather than “read” them. There have been a number of studies done that show data to the affect that children’s comprehension was better when hearing a story told, rather than read. It’s nice to mix it up a bit.

53. Along this same line I sometimes type the story onto shapes that are conducive to the story. For Halloween stories I type the story on pumpkins.
54. Enlarge some of your stories and make a “read-along” big book.
55. I sometimes scan a few of the pictures in my books and then laminate them. When I am telling the story I hold up a picture. In *Not Now Said The Cow*, there are a number of animals that have repetitive parts. I scanned animals, laminated them and then glued them to Popsicle sticks. While I’m reading I say their line and then hold up the animal. My students finish the sentence with “said the pig”, or cow, or whatever animal I am holding up. Younger children could also say the sound the animal makes. Instead of me always holding up the Popsicle sticks I sometimes pass them out to the children. When I read that part, letter, color, number etc. they hold up their appropriate stick.
56. Garage sales are goldmines for reading props. Many books are 10c to 50c. Stock up even if you have a copy. Cut the extra one up for use with a flannel board, as cue cards, laminated and cut up as a puzzle, used for a story starter or glued on Popsicle sticks for manipulatives.
57. Collect costumes, props, hats, etc. A mint-condition stuffed animal can easily be turned into a puppet. Slit the bottom of the animal and take out some of the stuffing, until you can easily insert your hand. In the stores, seasonal plush is always 50-75% off. Simply snip off the graduation mortarboard, seasonal garment, Santa hat etc. and you have an instant puppet by taking the stuffing out of everything but the head!
58. I also look for “container” things, fun baskets, cool candy boxes etc. That I can put clues, puppets, books etc. into, to add mystery to story hour. Make sure things do not smell musty.
59. If there’s any numerical, alphabetical repetition or countdown I have the children do it with me. In *Ten Little Dinosaurs*, they show me ten finger dinosaurs and we fold a finger down as we lose a dino. When there are none left they show me zero, we look through our “zero-eyes” to check for dinosaurs, and of course we don’t see any. We then can talk about the word extinct and even get into a conservation about saving our endangered species and the rainforests of the world.

60. I will often bring in “sound makers” to pass out, like kazoo’s for *The Kazoo Band* story, or silver jingle bells for the *Polar Express*. Before you read a story, ask yourself is there a sound in here that I can jazz up story time with by bringing in a harmonica etc. How ‘bout have a pot and pan parade as you walk out for recess, once around the playground and then collect the musical “instruments” in a bag.
61. I have a lovely sounding wind chime next to my story time rocker. A special child gets to gently ring it to announce 5 minutes before story time.
62. Pillowcases are great “bags” for musical instruments and larger props. You can easily write what’s in the bag with a permanent marker. Slit a tiny hole on the left hand corner of each side. Tie a long shoestring onto a safety pin and thread a “drawstring” through the hem of the case. Now you can easily shut your bag. Hang on a hook ‘til the next time you need it.
63. The various stages of a rainstorm can be done by rubbing hands together, snapping fingers, slapping desks and finally stomping feet. If you do this in a “round” the rain will intensify and then in the reverse, trickle to a soft gentle-sounding rain. Rain sticks are also wonderful; tip them over as you read or designate that job to a special child. Afterwards you could have everyone make a rain stick with rice and an empty toilet paper tube. Children can decorate them, and leave them in their lockers. When you tell stories with inclement weather the children can add the sound affects.
64. So that I can remember to insert a sound while reading I highlight my book. Sound books (those books with buttons to the right that you press and they play a sound) are terrific to have in your repertoire. Dr. Seuss’ *Gerald McBoing Boing* story about a little boy, who makes noises instead of talking, is a wonderful sound affects book. I label 1,2,3... on the sound squares of my books. Then I put the number in my story. When it comes time to press a noise I know which button to press. I simply hold the sound book on my lap. You could also opt to let a child be the designated “noise maker”.
65. I use sound books for my ABC books. When I get to a letter I press my alphabet sound book and the sound book will say A-Ahh-A as in Apple.

66. I use sound books for my animal books too. If I'm reading a book about farm animals I'll have my animal sound book in my lap. I'll ask my students: "What sound does a pig make?" They'll say "OINK-OINK" then to quiet them down I'll say: "Shhhh! Let's see if you're right." And I'll press my pig noise button.
67. I use sound books for my number books too. I simply press the number one, and do the same thing as above.
68. A new year's crank is great for a creaky door sound. At Halloween I purchased a creepy doorbell, a clacker, & a button that makes a ghoulish laugh, and a square box that lets out a wonderful scream. They are great for Halloween stories and the kids love pushing the buttons.
69. Baby "busy boxes" that attach to cribs are great noise machines. They are readily available at garage sales all the time. Keep a few handy and design their use around a specific story.
70. Toddler "steering wheel" toys that attach to a car seat, are fun noisemakers as well. Try using them when you are reading truck and car stories. I labeled mine Mrs. Henderson's Noise Maker and Sound Machine. There are also several intergalactic type books on the market, that come complete with the steering wheel and a variety of great outer space sounds.
71. Novelty shops also sell plastic clappers. They are 3 hands with a handle. When you shake them back and forth they clap. I use them in stories where there's applause. You could also use them after a story and tell the children: "Give your self a round of applause for being so good." (Because it's a "round" of applause, I clap in a circle and they mimic me.)
72. Re write a story or have students write one that will be a noise story. This can be done like a reader's theatre. Different groups of people will have a specific sound, noise or phrase/action that they do. For example write a Halloween story. Some of the children will be ghosts who go OOOOOOH or booooo, some will be witches who cackle, some will be children who shiver and shake and say "Oh no." Appropriate actions can add to the fun. Another idea is the pioneer times. You could have a wagon train noise, a horse, cowboys, women, Indians etc.

73. Whenever you are reading a book with sounds you have the perfect opportunity to add “noise-participation” from your students.
74. Most party stores and Dollar stores sell “Noise sticks.” These are neon-colored tubes that when inverted, make a very unusual sound. I use this for my Mama dinosaur to call her baby; I invert it when the baby calls back. I have my T-Rex puppet chew on the stick to “activate” it. When I am doing monkey stories I hold it in the middle and shake it up and down to make a sound like a monkey.
75. A squeeze bulb “horn” for a bicycle is a great noise prop; so are New Year’s Eve noisemakers! After the holiday much of this goes on sale 75%! (The creaky-cranky ones are perfect for opening a door to a haunted house.)
76. Sound or noise stories are a great way to introduce onomatopoeia. When I read farm stories like *Old MacDonald* or other books that have animal noises in them, I scan/laminate a picture of the animal and write the word-sound they make. Glue both of them to a Popsicle stick. When that animal is talking I’ll hold up the appropriate stick and my students will say the onomatopoeic word.
77. You can also fill empty film canisters with rice or a variety of different “sounds.” Glue them shut and simply tell students what’s inside. During “spooky” stories they can add the sound affects.
78. Look for stories where the children can “become” the sound. Assign a sound to a different group of children and then when you come to that portion of the story you point to them and they make the sound. “Timing” is very important in this.
79. When I’m reading color stories children hold up color cards. You could also have any child wearing that color stand.
80. **Timothy Tyler is a Turtle.** (I also have a **T. Rex**) He starts with the letter **T** when you’d like **to Talk** you quietly wait your **Turn**. When I **Toss Timothy Tyler Turtle To** you it’s your **Turn To Talk!** After you are done sharing your **Thoughts** you may **Toss** him **To** the next friend who is appropriately raising their hand quietly. This is a great way to introduce alliteration to older students. I also have little “balls” with wiggle eyes and a zipper for their lips. A book is inside. Scholastic sells them for \$4.95. “Slammers” are available at most Dollar stores. When you toss them, they “slam”

into someone's hand and they say something. These are great for older children. Remind them to gently "toss" the object, not "shot-put" or "overhand" it through the air.

81. To get students settled down I might begin with a "Shhhhhh!" and peek into my picnic basket, box, bag or whatever unique thing I happen to have that "hides" my puppet-helpers. The "friend" happens to be very shy and "he" won't come out unless it is quiet or he hears the magic word "Please".
82. A slide whistle is another way to get attention and help get the "wiggles" out. Blow on the whistle fast or slow. Children listen for the pitch. Is it high or low? If it's high they stand up. If it's low they sit down. If you blow it slow they move slowly, if you blow it fast they move quickly. This is a real hoot to watch and the children LOVE it! Of course you need to end on a s-l-o-w -- down beat so they are sitting quietly. I have my students take a few deep breaths too as I slide my whistle up and down really fast 3 times before I slowed them to a sitting position! ☺
83. Leapin' Leonard has his lips zipped. During a story I don't like to interrupt it by saying "Rachel are your lips zipped?" So I simply hold up Leonard, or my zipper. He is also my Line Leader. His Lips are zipped to show how we Line up and go down the hall. Leapie is his Little brother. He is the "caboose" he brings up the rear so that I know at a glance whom the last child is so that I have every child accounted for. I call them to line up according to a particular skill we might be learning that day. Every one who's wearing the color red, or anyone who has the letter A in any part of their entire name etc. may line up. As they come up I have them "count off". Then I always know how many children should be coming in after recess or an activity. In line we always have a buddy to our right and left. If this is how I want them to line up later they "Look to the left and then to the right and see who's the friend in their sight." It teaches left and right and I can always ask: "Who's missing their buddy?" if my count is off.
84. Because children need to learn sequence, organization, and order skills I always post an agenda on the board. It's a great "check list" for me; older students can help remind me if I forgot to do something. I read it aloud sounding enthusiastic and say: "Boy are we going to have fun or a great time today look what we get to learn/do!" The story is left blank to add to the mystery. When I introduce the title we read it together and the "author of the day" gets to post it on the agenda.

85. To get them started thinking I have a riddle or puzzle on the board they can do for extra credit. The next day I post the answer and a new problem. They love this! Lots of times we do the riddle together as an introduction to the story we are about to read.
86. Another fun way to introduce a story is to ask them a question via Popsicle sticks. I have two large plastic rings glued to the board. I write a question that pertains to the story we are going to read. I have two answers (one for each circle... one correct and one incorrect. Or sometimes it's merely an opinion) they have a colored Popsicle stick with a magnet on the back and their name on the front, they put it in the circle that agrees with their answer. Later, I use this in our discussion of the story. Does anyone want to change his or her answer? It incorporates math-related skills like counting, and sorting. We can even graph the group's answers.
87. Because I want to know "where my students are emotionally" e.g., who's already having a bad hair day; in the beginning of the year I take 3 pictures of each child. (One happy smiling face, one sad face, one angry or upset face.) I cut the heads into a circle with a piece of Velcro on the back that they stick to a black felt board with their names on it. As an art activity I pass out different "clothes" the children can color and cut out. These are laminated. (For kindergarten to aid in letter recognition

I have different clothes for each letter we are studying e.g., coats and caps for the letter C etc.) To help take attendance my children come in and "get dressed" putting on the face they're feeling that day. One of my first units or mini-lesson will be on feelings. It helps the children be sensitive to the needs of others, promotes sympathy and empathy and I know who needs a little more TLC on that day (hugs!). It's great for group sharing and I can refer to it in storytelling as well. The clothes they put on will often be associated with what stories we will be reading. Kings & Queens for fairy tales, animal skins when we read about animals etc

88. Make a class set of "Magic Mirrors" with recycled CD's Here's how:

- ❖ A Magic-Mirror...Mirror Mirror on the wall...
- ❖ Hot glue large Popsicle sticks to CD's.
- ❖ Cut out various circular "faces"
- ❖ Laminate them

- ❖ Glue the “happy” one to the “printed” part of the CD
- ❖ Make a Velcro nose
- ❖ Put a piece of Velcro on the backs of the other emotions
- ❖ Children pair up in the EEKK! Position. (Eye-to-eye, Knee-to-knee)
- ❖ Children share their moods, feelings with each other.
- ❖ You can use the mirror portion to view expressions, mouth and tongue positions when you do vowels, consonants etc.

89. Look for the clue. To get students excited about what we will be reading, identifiable clues are placed somewhere in the hall on their way to class. So they know that it is from Mrs. Henderson’s class, clues will be large and laminated and have a “Paddington-type bear” hang tag. “Please return to Mrs. Henderson’s room; thank you!” The student who brings it in will receive a “terrific-ticket”. So that this is not the same person each day, once you have been a successful “detective” you get a sticker on the detective chart and have to wait till everyone in the class has brought in a clue I have a laminated big question mark on the door so the children know this is a day to look for a clue. If I’m doing the alphabet and we’re studying the letter **B** the clue might be in the **b**athroom, C in the cafeteria, H in the hall etc. All my students are ABC DE-ctives. They move up to FBI (**F**or **B**eing **I**ntelligent) when they find a clue.

90. To make reading and learning an exciting adventure I like to give other clues as they walk in. (They would be appropriate for that story--like I might have a “treasure map” on the door, and an “X”-marks-the-spot, in the center of our circle when I read a pirate story, or possibly bear tracks leading to a basket filled with things beginning with the letter “B”--when we study that letter or read *Brown Bear Brown Bear What Do You See?* Etc. These are great lead-in questions for discussion and a fun way to introduce a story.

91. If you are studying animals or reading stories about animals you could have “footprints” of that animal “walking” to your story chair. Students could guess what animal belongs to the tracks.

92. Sometimes I’ll have the “clue” be a backdrop header that I got from Scholastic. Several times a year Scholastic has a 50% off book fair for teachers. They are held at their warehouse All schools are sent flyers, but you can also get on their mailing list. They often have promotional headers and displayers that they give away free. These are the types of things that bookstores use. I set them

up behind my reading chair when appropriate. One with dinosaurs is the perfect “setting” for prehistoric stories, and a great way to introduce the concept of “setting.”

93. Introduce a story with a foreign language. Teach them a word in that language for a story about a different culture. I like using accents too! They really aren't that hard. I teach 5 Spanish words a month to my students because we have a huge Hispanic population in our district.
94. Sign language is fun too. There are many easy-to-follow signing books available. Take some time and “translate” a book into sign language. Teach the students the various signs and when you get to that part in the book, have the children sign the word or phrase. Learning to sign the phrase “I Love You.” Is very easy and wonderfully appropriate with feelings books, Valentine's Day, and Love-themed books. I put sign language in many of our songs. The children catch on fast.
95. On certain occasions I use my tape recorder. I wrapped a box with beautiful floral paper with a removable lid, topped with a large bow. I leave it sit there, to build anticipation. When someone asks about the box. “Well, let's see.” I pull out the tape recorder. It plays 30 seconds of the *Mission Impossible* theme song. “Your mission, should you choose it, and I might add, you have no choice--is to...” My voice then states what I want the children to be listening for etc. The tape does not “self-destruct”, but sometimes you hear someone screaming or some other nonsense at the end.
96. I have reading, writing and test-taking survival kits. These are zip-lock storage bags filled with goodies and a meaning of it all on a sheet of paper. I have these sitting on their desks several times a year. Create some of your own; you can adapt them to almost anything. I have one for reading free to copy on the website.
97. Eric Carle's book *The Lonely Lightening Bug* has a great last page where the lightening bugs actually light up. I have the children enter in the dark and I dart my laser pens and flashlights here and there, then I read the book by flashlight, to give the full impact of the story. You can get glow-in-the-dark paint and dab some on the ends of the lightening bugs for an eerie affect. As a follow up activity I pass out yellow construction paper and yellow crayons. I tell the students to draw a lightening bug on the paper. I also tell them to write the word lightening bug at the top and their name at the bottom. “Can we see a lightening bug during the day?” “No.” Then night falls....I have students do a black watercolor wash

over their picture with a sponge brush. “Magically” the lightening bugs appear. Let dry and mount on a piece of black construction paper. I also have yellow Highlighter activities for the children to do. You can design worksheets with lightening bugs as your backdrop. Highlight all the letter k’s, or highlight all the sums with even numbers, or highlight all your spelling words. (Wherever they highlight it should be at the end of a lightening bug, so they look like their glowing.) For a fun way to practice writing, poke a short pin into the center of an eraser on a pencil with a lightening bug “tail” of yellow ribbon hanging down. Students can “air write” their letters with the pencils too, the ribbon-tassels will add zip to the exercise.

98. I add a construction paper “book binding” to our pretend “bookshelf” each time we read a story. This is great for alphabetizing, counting, and just seeing at a glance, how many fun books we have read during story telling. On 100 Day we have 100 books to celebrate as well.
99. To encourage children to read on their own, they each color either a snake or caterpillar head. I laminate these and tape them to their lockers. Each time they read a book they fill out a multi-colored shape and add it to their caterpillar/snake as part of a “growing” body. Prizes are awarded at the end of the year for the “longest” caterpillar/snake.
100. I also have a “journey in reading” world map on the wall with yarn strings pinned to it. One end of the yarn is pinned to the place a “book took us!” the other end is outside the map pinned to a card with the name of the country/city on it. We are all tourists and world travelers. I sometimes correlate writing assignments with the map too.
101. I signal story hour with the tinkling of chimes, ringing a bell, honking a horn, shaking the maracas or doing something that is appropriate for the story. I keep all my “story-starter-sounds” in a labeled box. My helper of the day gets the special privilege of choosing and making the sound. Children know that this is the sound that signals story hour because I use Freaky Freddy and have them **freeze** first. (Fred is a neon-green toucan puppet that honks) As soon as I have their attention the sound is made and they can “melt”. They know it’s time to clean up and go in the community friendship circle for story time.
102. I have a special chair for story hour. I also have a matching smaller author’s chair. I simply spray painted two old chairs

(garage sale treasures!) black, to look like chalkboards. The spokes and rungs are painted to look like crayons, rulers and pencils. I paint or stencil on a checker board, apple and flower designs. A white paint pen adds some favorite sayings. (Writing on the blackboard!) Star-of-the-week or whatever, will have the seat of honor. Everyone has their “lips zipped” and we begin.

103. Sometimes I like to read in a different location. I have a stool painted in the same fashion at the front of the room. I sometimes use that for telling tales as well as when I’m teaching other lessons. A routine is nice to follow, but it is also good to change the location or just let children remain in their seats as a bit of variety.
104. Sometimes I will sprinkle “pixie dust” (invisible), sometimes I will blow “quiet bubbles” to help children settle down.
105. A fun way to introduce a story is with photographs. e.g. For Mercer Meyer’s *Boy Scout Story*, I show them pictures of my sons Jason & Steven, who are Eagle Scouts. When I read a dog book I show them a picture of Harley my twin sister’s dog etc. If I read about family I show them 1 or two pictures of mine. I put these in paper frames and pass them around. Children get to know me, and we have a few minutes of sharing time.
106. Any other “hands-on” thing that you can share with the students also adds interest as well as knowledge. With my dinosaur books I share real fossils. I glued a piece of a real prehistoric egg on a neon-colored plastic dinosaur frame. I also purchased a trilobite (bug) and glued that in another frame. The students love to look, touch, taste and smell anything that adds zip to your stories. To help them understand the unbelievable size concept of a dinosaur, we went outside and measured out 150 feet long, and 20 feet tall. We then “chalked” the dinosaur. All of us stood inside, and guess-timated how many children (the entire school) it would take to fill up our dinosaur. Reading is a great opportunity to study math and all sorts of related subjects.
107. To avoid endless comments and interruptions preface calling on a student with “Is this a question or a comment?” Students know that questions are OK; comments are reserved for sharing after the story. Children need to know that they will be given an opportunity to express themselves **later**. This helps them learn self-control while I’m reading.
108. Children may have the option to stay in their desks and put their heads down.

109. Star Student or those who have earned “special privileges” may sit in the beanbags.
110. Sometimes what I wear will be appropriate to the story. I have a “Roaring Twenties” dress, a “rainforest” dress, a Dr. Seuss hat and jumper etc. I have a Native American feather and beaded shirt and skirt complete with feathered headband and turquoise jewelry as well. Blue jean shirts and vests are easily decorated for storytelling. Cut out fabric and glue it to your outfit. A touch of puffy paint around the edges keeps it from fraying and gives a fabulous look. Having a pocketed apron is also great to “stuff” things in and take out while you tell a story.
111. I cut out some extra pieces of the fabric and make pins and necklaces to match the costumes/clothes. Just glue to a piece of cardboard and either “modge-podge” or cover with a layer of Elmer’s glue. It will dry clear, hard and shiny. If you want it thicker and resin-appearing continue to apply more coats. I outline them with a black magic marker. This takes care of any white jagged lines you may have. Simply put the dried pin on a piece of paper and trace it. Then glue a pin back to it. (If you glue your pin vertically and not horizontally, it can then be worn as a necklace. Just thread a chain through it.
- You could also use these extra pieces to help you tell a story. For example, I have a jumper that has sunflowers across the bottom. I have a Velcro ladybug, caterpillar, bumble bee and butterfly that I have “flying” around the flowers. When I read the story *Caterpillar’s Wish* I wear this jumper and add the “bugs” as I go. Children think this is awesome, and all I need to do when I wash it is take off the wooden or laminated Velcro pieces. You could do this with a story apron as well.
112. To keep your costumes or fabric props from having creases and wrinkles in them, roll them instead of folding them when you put them away.
113. A great review of a story and to work on sequencing is to make a time line. Write one with the children on the board, or make up separate strips and then post them. These could also be pre-done, laminated and handed out to the children to “organize” after the story. This concept works great for historical books, as well as longer chapter books.

114. Hot glue a long strip of cork behind or near your story telling chair. If you ever want to hang up a time line, story line, poster, story quilt etc. It's handy.
115. Fabric books are not just for babies! There are some adorable stories that have been specifically marketed for this purpose. *The Rainbow Zebra* is an adorable tale, and is currently at Wal-Mart. Even if you don't have a sewing machine, just cut the "pages" out and glue them to tag board if you want a "hard" book, or to flannel, if you want a soft book. Or skip the book idea and just use the pieces to tell/read the story using your flannel board.
116. There are some wonderful alphabetical and numerical fabrics as well. Cut up the pieces for a flannel board, make a material book, glue them on cardboard and then laminate or shellac and glue to a Popsicle stick etc.
117. You can LAMINATE fabric! They make great flannel board pieces or glue magnets on the back and use on your white board to sequence and pattern stories! They are perfect to make number things for subtraction books too!
118. You could also do a quilt-square story. Tell the story and have children Velcro the picture square to the first section of the quilt. This is easily done with numbers or the alphabet, but could also be done with other stories as well. While you're telling the story thumbtack the quilt to a strip of cork. Children can hang up their squares as you read, or after you have finished the story. There are alphabet blankets available in the fabric department. Buy two; one to leave as the quilt, the other to cut out the squares and Velcro to the blanket.
119. Here's another idea: Buy two sets of material books. One you use the "pages" to tell the story and the other you cut up the parts and have children Velcro the "characters" to the "page" as you read it. This gives your "book" a 3 dimensional look as well. Keep the pieces in a Ziploc baggie.
120. Another piece of fabric that's a great addition to story telling is that of a map. Wal-Mart also has the world map on a panel. It's a great mini-lesson in geography to have the children find where the setting of the story is. You could hang this on the wall by your story chair, or you could use it as a "magic carpet" and put it on the floor. "Today our magic carpet is flying us to Africa as we read the story *Why Mosquitoes Buzz*. Who can show me where Africa is on our magic carpet? Africa is a continent..."etc.

121. When you are telling stories about the seasons you could also make a flannel board tree or banner of a tree. Simply have the trunk with “naked” branches. When you read about winter add some snowflakes to one $\frac{1}{4}$ of the tree’s branches, spring add some buds and blossoms to another $\frac{1}{4}$, summer add the green leaves, fall add all sorts of colored leaves. Type up, or use flannel letters that spell the seasons. Have children add the pieces as you read the story and then correctly label the seasonal section once the tree is completed.
122. Fergie is my little frog backpack. Who knows what he’s hiding in his pack. Sometimes nothing. Maybe an invisible note that introduces the story. If a story has a treat in it, i.e. I’m reading *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie*, Fergie might have a little box of animal crackers. “HMMMMM who’s sitting quietly that I can give a cookie too?” Get the idea? It’s a real “super-duper shutter upper!” Sometimes it’s like a “show and tell” thing for me. I read a story about a volcano and Fergie has a piece of lava rock inside his pack etc. The next day was going to be Winnie the Pooh P.J. Day and of course Fergie had a secret envelope with a party invitation inside. Just a little reminder to wear P.J.’s tomorrow etc.
123. Stories about the teddy bear Corduroy could be told with a teddy on your lap wearing something made from corduroy. Children are not familiar with materials like felt, velvet, satin, silk etc. Whenever I tell a story involving fabric in a description such as the long black velvet gown of the queen, I keep a swatch as a bookmark in the book, so when I get to this new word I have something tactile to share with the children.
124. You may want to look for an extra Corduroy book, cut up the pictures, laminate them and glue them to a piece of corduroy. A great art project after reading corduroy is to cut out pieces of corduroy in the shape of a bear and glue them to a piece of cardboard. Children then have a Corduroy of their own. You may want to glue some buttons to their bears and read the story where Corduroy loses his button.
125. An alternative to a story apron is a “fanny pack” you can pick these up at most department stores, or make one out of blue jeans. Instead of keeping your story props in apron pockets, pick them out of your fanny pack. Perhaps on the days you wear your apron or pack you can have children remain at their desks. As you walk around the room telling the story, pass out the props to be put on the flannel board.

126. After the story “read” the flannel board. You could also pass out some sort of treat that correlates to the story. I.e., animal crackers when you are reading a zoo book etc. or the item they will need to make a project or do a lesson afterwards. For example when I read a caterpillar story I may pass out all the “fingers” from the gloves that I cut up to be used to make a caterpillar finger puppet after the story. Children can wear their puppet while I tell the story, and then afterwards I would pass out the markers, wiggle eyes and glue and we’d complete it. All of these “ingredients” can come from the fanny pack.
127. Tell the story of *The Three Little Pigs* On Three Boutique Kleenex boxes that look like houses made of straw, sticks and brick. Or use only one box and have each side be a different house. Turn it as you read. Keep your manipulatives or Popsicle stick finger puppets inside the box. Write the script on the box, or keep the “pages” inside the box and pull them out.
128. Doing a camping, hiking or outdoorsy story? Tell it with props from a backpack and use a walking stick for a prop. If it’s a paperback and not too bulky hot glue the book right to the pack.
129. Here’s another “camp story” idea: Type the story on slips of laminated paper with a hole punched in the center. Thread the ordered “pages” onto a long stick perfect for roasting marshmallows. Pull the story off the stick and “read” it. This is great for “Camp Read-Away”. (I number the back so I have an easy time “threading” the story back after I tell it. Either scan, or cut the pictures from the book and laminate them. You can hold them up as you read the appropriate line and then put them on a flannel board. (I number the backs of these as well). Have marshmallows as a special treat afterwards. I like to tell stories around a pretend “bonfire.” Three logs and some yellow or orange metallic paper crunched up and you have a great fire. Children sit in a circle. You could follow up the story with a campfire song.
130. Bath towels with a hole cut in the center make wonderful and inexpensive costumes for children.
131. During the month of March when you’re reading some Irish or leprechaun stories why not have children dress up as these miniature Munchkins? Invite parents to come see the performance.

Here's how:

- ❖ You read an Irish story involving leprechauns,
- ❖ Discuss myths and legends,
- ❖ Students each bring in a white pillowcase, button shirt, and a pair of blue jean shorts.
- ❖ Have children draw a huge face on the pillowcase.
- ❖ Snap shorts around their knees, button the shirt around waist, and tuck into pants.
- ❖ Children put hands on their head with elbows sticking out, put pillowcase over head, tuck bottom of pillowcase into "neck" of shirt.
- ❖ They will look like miniature people! You can insert dowels in the sleeves with gloves to look like "arms". This gives an even better affect.
- ❖ Play some Irish jig music and either choreograph a dance or let them free-spirit movements
- ❖ Children can make green leprechaun hats and ties out of green construction paper. You could also tape a few shamrocks on them as well.
- ❖ Make shamrock invitations and invite parents to your St. Patty's Day performance. Children could also read aloud a story or some Irish poetry. Serve lime Kool-Aid and a green snack for refreshments.
- ❖ These costumes are great for fairy tales like Rumpelstilskin or *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*.

132. Appropriate background music is also great. I have Rainforest Sounds, Native American, Mexican, Australian and Halloween spooky sound CD's.
133. I always use props. e.g., A rain stick, dinosaur sound stick, puppets etc. If it's a spooky story I read it in the dark with a flashlight.
134. I use a wooden crate with a pull out fabric drawer to store puppets in. I keep it next to my rocking chair. Then when I'm reading a story, I can easily find a puppet to add interest and student involvement to my story time. This also doubles as a play center. Students can pull out the drawer and carry it to the "Imagination Station-Puppet Theater". When finished, they simply carry it back and put it away.
135. A mask is a great storytelling prop. You can put them in front of your face as you change characters or pass them out to children. When you read a line they stand up and mime the

action—or they can read and say the sentence as dramatically as they can. Here are some mask ideas:

- ❖ Paper plate masks
- ❖ Foam masks. Oriental Trading Company or Fun Express have great assortments. <http://www.funexpress.com> 1-800-228-0122 or <http://www.orientaltrading.com>
- ❖ Crown “masks” Make a construction paper crown with that “head” on it. Laminate them. You or the children wear as you read/tell the story.
- ❖ Collect paint paddles (they are free) and hot glue the mask to the stick
- ❖ Store them in a decorated can, plastic pitcher or vase for easy access. You can use them for a variety of activities besides storytelling. Children seem to be more uninhibited when they “hide” behind a mask.

136. Cutting up extra books and laminating characters, letters, numbers and animals—and then gluing them to Popsicle sticks are a great way to make stories interactive. I make sure I have enough sticks and pass out the appropriate ones for that story. When we are on the letter A, all the A’s hold up their letter, color, shape, number etc. When that character is speaking, who ever is that person/animal, holds up their stick. Afterwards you can have a review, line up, sing, sound off etc. with the sticks.

137. When introducing storytelling to children show them the huge variety of books. They are enthralled with pop-up, shape, pull out, flap up, flip, and turn books. (Anything that’s different.) For older children I show them samples and how to make them. Choose one type, then write and illustrate a creative class book!

138. You can also do this with the masks. You can read the text and the child can sit or stand with their mask-stick in front of their face. Older children can read their line while looking through their mask. The possibilities are great.

139. Sometimes we have “Camp Read-Away” and children use their sleeping bags, pillows, or blankets that they brought, and we sit around our “pretend” campfire. I actually have 8 collapsible tents that I set up in my classroom where my children read for 10 minutes in a tent in the dark with flashlights. They LOVE it.

140. Sometimes there's a special treat following the reading. e.g., I stamp their hand with a dino stamp, or they get a sticker, a picture to take home to color, a book mark, etc. When I read *Gummie Bears* or the *M&M* or *Cheerio counting books* I give them gummies, Cheerios or M&M's. For *Cookie Monster's Big Day* I bake a huge cookie on a pizza pan with tons of chocolate chips in it. We all get a bite. This also works for *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie*. (McDonald's sells miniature ones too!) I pass out animal crackers when I read zoo or farm books. When I read *Rainbow Fish* or ocean stories I have cheddar-cheese fishy crackers etc. This is a great theme-snack and transition to the next activity.
141. To help with organization, I keep props and treats in zip lock bags with that particular book. Fishy crackers and cheerios have cute matching plastic containers to use. M&M's also has stuffed M&M men that hold M&M's. You can use the "men" as puppets and then pass out the treats. Never give a color or flavor choice or you'll waste too much time. "*Ya get what ya get, so don't pitch a fit or in the Sweet Seat you'll sit!*," Remember to reinforce please and thank you. ☺ Once I was passing out gummies and I wanted the children to say thank you. I came to one little girl and gave her the treat and I said: "What do you say honey?" and she replied with a big smile... "*More please.*" ☺
142. I organize my books by season. I keep October/Halloween books in one box. When It's the first of the month I put those books out. I have another box with all the props, clues, etc. that I need for those books.
143. Before a story I have some sort of movement game, finger play, little activity songs or poems, or merely "throwing the aliens out". When we are finished with the story I do the same thing. Sometimes we will march back to our desks or do a movement back to our seats that was story-appropriate. For example after reading a butterfly and bee story I pass out yellow & black ribbon-bracelets. (I tied 2 pieces of ribbon to a ponytail scrunchy. We buzz back to our desks making a B pattern with our ribbon-bracelets. I play Beethoven's *Flight of the Bumble Bees*. I match red scrunchies with red ribbon and do movements, music and song for color stories like *Color Dance* as well. A big plastic hook on the wall keeps them from getting tangled.

144. I have a transitional statement that “flows” us into the next activity and it is often “thematically” related. e.g., . At our desks we might work on making a butterfly or bee or practice writing the letter B. or doing an art activity like making a skeleton after we read a story about Halloween etc.

145. You can add a simple “paper prop” to many stories.

When I read *Brown Bear Brown Bear* I pass out laminated turquoise paper glasses for the children to wear. I have them arrange the order of the animals on a felt board. Each child has either an animal or a color to add to the board; as I am reading they hold up their paper. After the story they arrange the pieces.

Ellis Die Cut Machine also has a glasses block for ease of cutting glasses. *My Tall Color Book* is a story about children who put on different colored glasses. Whatever glass color they are wearing that’s how they see the world, or that’s the kinds of things they see. i.e., red glasses see red strawberries, apples etc. I laminated 5 pair of paper glasses of each color and used permanent marker to color in the “lenses”. When I read this story we take turns looking through the different colors and naming things in the world that are that color. I glue a Popsicle stick to the right side of the glasses and they hold them up like opera glasses.

146. Books that have “sound card buttons” on the side of them can be used for other stories. The doorbell sound in *Spots Day at the Farm* I use for the story *When the Doorbell Rings*. I often carry a sound book & press various sounds as I read other stories. Watch for sales of a wireless portable doorbell, it’s a great asset in your bag of tricks. A telephone magnet that rings when you push it, is wonderful for stories involving a telephone. When I stop to answer the phone the kids are amazed that I’m talking on a “phone”.

147. If there are “prop” type things you can use while telling a story, do so; they enhance the tale. For example in Seuss’s *McBoing* a letter is sent home to McBoing’s parents. I re-wrote that letter and then I insert it in that section in an envelope as a bookmark. Instead of reading from the book, I read from the letter. In *Miss Nelson is Missing* children are shooting spit wads and paper airplanes. I made a couple airplanes and I throw these away from the listeners.

148. I have my students show me their listening ears by using their hands to wiggle and jiggle their ears.

149. Use books to introduce other subjects! There are many books on the market that are great for introducing math. Here's how I used one to introduce long division to 3rd graders.
150. You can use a story to introduce other subjects. In the above book *When the Doorbell Rings* is about a mom who bakes 1 dozen cookies for her two children. They each get 6 until the doorbell rings... when 2 more children show up. Now they each get 3 cookies until the doorbell rings and more children come. I use this story to introduce long division. I read the story, pass out cookies and then our classroom "doorbell" rings and aliens walk in to "share" our cookies. Plastic knives divide the cookies from half to quarters until the doorbell rings for the last time. It's their leader -- they have all left. We now have an entire cookie (4 pieces) to ourselves!
151. Multi-cultural books are great for introducing geography. An inventor or scientist can introduce science etc.
152. Use a children's book as an example of onomatopoeia, or whatever else you are trying to teach. Books are great for teaching grammar lessons. Children's books are also great as introductions to writing assignments. . For example, fairytale take-offs are great to use as springboards for teaching students how to write a parody such as a fractured fairy tale.
153. Laminated and cut up pictures are great to use as story starters. Pass out the pictures and have the students write a story around that picture, and then share it with the class.
154. Voice changes are not that difficult to perfect. Play around with sounding like a high-pitched animal/person, a monster, a man, an old person, a witch, a child, a baby. A few basics and you have a zillion different characters adaptable for any story.
- ❖ Voices can be changed with...
 - ❖ high and low pitch,
 - ❖ soft and loud volume, (how 'bout a Marilyn Monroe breathy voice for a mouse?)
 - ❖ and even different accents.
 - ❖ -For an English accent don't say any H's.
 - ❖ " 'av you got an 'amster for a pet?"
 - ❖ -Southern accents are slow, musical and easy to get into.
 - ❖ -Australians say a for e (chase for cheese) and oi for I [Froi for Fry]
 - ❖ Ah is er (Afriker not Africa).

- ❖ -I go through my text and spell the word the way I want to say it crossing out and re-writing the words in my book.
155. Use of slang-uage instead of correct English is also fun.
 156. Fracture a Fairy tale by changing letters. i.e., Rindercella Slopped her Dripper instead of Cinderella dropped her slipper.
 157. When I read *Jack and the Beanstalk* I show a variety of the different versions including several pop-up books. I tell the story rather than reading anyone version and show the various pictures in the different books as I go. For older students you can do a math extension by making a Venn diagram of two of their choice. I use hula-hoops resting in the chalk sill when I diagram. Of course this is a great opportunity to use my “magic change bag”. I have enough coffee beans for each child to put a “magic” bean in the bag. We count them as we go. I produce a 15-foot beanstalk! I then pass out a lemon-lime jellybean to each child and we slowly “grow” from a sitting down position to a standing one as we reach for the sky, becoming as tall as we can. It’s a great stretching activity after a story, and a nice little treat.
 158. Whenever you read a story that has a lot of names in it, substitute your student’s names and watch their faces light up.
 159. The *Gingerbread Man* is also a fairy tale with a zillion different versions. I show the variety I have in my “collection”. My favorite version is written in rhyme with a happy ending--the little old woman catches the gingerbread boy so the fox doesn’t eat him.

Instead of reading it from the book, I re-typed the text in 12-point pica and glued the verses to brown construction paper gingerbread boys. I numbered, laminated, and then decorated the “fronts” of the boys with puffy paint so the “cookie” looks like it’s frosted. I also glued a circular magnet on the story side, so when I am finished reading the gingerbread boy, I put him face up on a metal cookie sheet, and continue reading. I lay the “boys” in 4 piles of 3.

Hot glue your first magnet to the center of the head, the next on his hand and the 3rd one on his foot. The paper is thin enough to magnetize through all the layers, and by gluing in this fashion your “boys” won’t slip and they will stack nicer. (Make sure you have a metal, not aluminum cookie sheet or they won’t stick.) Start by having all of the numerical gingerbread boys on your lap. You can have your cookie sheet sitting up easel-style. I want the children to repeat the “Run, run as fast as you can. You can’t catch me I’m the gingerbread

man.” chorus, so I have that printed on a large gingerbread heart. I glued this to a wooden spoon tied with raffia for a cute affect. When I want the children to repeat the verse I hold up the spoon. A lot of children have never tasted gingerbread, so I always bring some that I’ve baked. If you’re not a baker you can always buy some ginger snap cookies at the store. Keebler has actual gingerbread men.

160. Use the time before, during or after the story to teach mini-lessons. For example in the story *The Gingerbread Man* I cut and laminated 10 gingerbread boys. I printed the numerical as well as the word number on each “cookie”. After the story we sing the song “1 little 2 little 3 little gingerbreads” to the tune of “*Ten Little Indians*”. I put the “cookies” up as we count. This could be done with any story’s main character. (10 Little Bears and One Little Goldilocks etc.) Reinforce whatever numbers you are working on. I.e. each “cookie” could have represented 5 gingerbread boys. “5 little 10 little 15 little gingerbreads etc.”
161. I also have them only take one bite out of their gingerbread boy and then we graph what part they bit off; the head, the arm or the leg. I try to do other subject extensions like math or writing whenever possible via a story.
162. You could also do simple addition and subtraction $1+1$ gingerbread boy = 2. I like having a nice flow to my lessons. “OK now take your seats we’re going to do math...” with gingerbread men. It’s nice to flow into the next lesson and carry the gingerbread story line & theme with you.
163. I often have the children go from story time to reading. Sometimes I will make sight words to match the story. For example in the gingerbread man story I chose a dozen words I wanted to learn/review with the children. I typed them up on my computer and ran them off on brown construction paper. After the story I put each of the words up on my flannel board and we identify and sound them out.
164. I do a lot with spatial directions as well. It’s one of our standards. Staying with the gingerbread man as an example I put a fox in the middle of the flannel board. I simply scan the picture from the book and laminate it. I put a piece of sticky Velcro on the back. I die cut and laminate a gingerbread boy and have students put the gingerbread man beside, above, behind, under etc. the fox.

165. The same thing can be done with identifying body parts. Give each child a gingerbread man and have them sit the gingerbread boy on their nose, forehead, shoulder, thigh, hip, wrist, shin, chest etc. Finish up with a round of the Gingerbread Pokey. These above activities fit with any theme and any story to meet these report card standards.
166. Another great reading transition after the sight word identification is to type up a “script” of the story for each child. They can go back to their desks and you can “pop corn” around the room with each child reading a sentence and then calling on another student.
167. If you want to turn this into a writing lesson as well, students could copy the sentences from an overhead/blackboard onto their papers. For younger students you could have the sentences typed with blanks for the children to fill in. For older students have them write which version of the story they liked better and why.
168. Another extension would be a quickie art break for them. I made a master of a gingerbread shape and typed the text inside the shapes. After we read the story, students cut out the shapes including two gingerbread boys from brown construction paper. They decorate their “cookie cover” and then I staple them together. I send a note home that says “Look what I made in school today! I’d love to share how I can read my new book with you tonight!” You can make simple books from many of your stories.
169. If you have beginning readers instead of doing an entire book do a portion of it. The repeated saying “Run, run as fast as you can you can’t catch me I’m the gingerbread man.” could be done. Nursery rhymes or songs that your students are familiar with, are also a great option. For example in the rhyme “*Three Little Kittens That Lost Their Mittens*” students could write the poem on mitten-shaped paper.
170. As a fun alternative speak Shakespeare in Modern-day Slang.
171. When you change characters have your posture shift to portray that text. (Scrunch down and slouch for one, sit up straight for another, shift your hips and fidget, hang your head etc.)

172. Have children mimic what the character is doing; running, sleeping, smiling etc.
173. Change a story into a reader's theatre. After you have introduced the story have the children take parts and do a reader's theatre. I bought one of those black "ready-set-action" slat boards, and I give it to a child to slap together. We have the actors standing and the rest be the audience. If I have time we take turns and switch. Even my Y5's love Reader's Theatre.
174. Tell a story instead of reading the story, or after you read it, pop corn around the circle and have your students re-tell it!
175. Make some fantastic, yet easy--one-prop affects. Such as...
- ❖ a long braid to depict Rapunzel's long hair,
 - ❖ a newspaper beanstalk that "grows" is also an interesting prop.
176. In *Caps for Sale* have a student sit under a "tree" and have paper plate or construction paper caps (real garage sale ones would be super) on their head. Have other students be the monkeys and pantomime the tale. Paint stores like Sherwin Williams have even given me paint caps for free. I cover the blue logo with blue tape and write my student's names in black marker. They now have a cap to wear for the story, and a "thinking cap" to wear during tests! As an art activity your students could decorate them using magic markers.
177. I like to make story prompting paddles. When I tell *The Icky Sticky Frog* story I scanned a picture of his head, laminated it and glued it to a paint stick. Every time the frog gets ready to sneak up on an insect I show the froggy paint paddle with the word SHHHHH! on it. The children all say "Shhhh!" When I read
- For *Little Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly* my paddle is a flyswatter. I glued a plastic fly to one side. On the other side I wrote "I don't know why she swallowed a fly..." and on the side with the fly: "Perhaps she'll die!" I flip it up and then over when I want the children to repeat those words. I have paddles for numbers and the alphabet as well as shapes too. They are great for whatever things repeat that you want the children to participate in.
178. Adding the simple prop of a pair of glasses, a scarf, or a hat can show a character change and add interest. Funny noses, a moustache, beard, jewelry or a wig are also inexpensive and fun.

179. When I read a story involving picnics I place the book in a picnic basket and we all sit on a large sheet that I spread out.
180. Flavor Ice is about 10c a student and just as refreshing as Popsicles. It's a nice treat when you read picnic stories.
181. Whenever I have a special treat for the children, that is correlated to the story, I keep it in a plastic container. The dollar store has wonderful long cylindrical containers that are great for crackers etc. I put the container in a "hidden" bag, box, picnic basket or whatever, and pull it out at the end of story time. I use cheerio's, M&M's, and gummies for those trademark counting books. Fishy, teddy grahams and animal crackers are great for those themed stories. It's just a nice touch.
182. I have an adorable frog umbrella that I open up and sit under when I read frog books. These umbrellas come in cats, and ladybugs as well. Just stick a piece of plastic PVC pipe sawed to an appropriate height into a cardboard box and you have an umbrella holder, that looks like a reading lamp. (PVC pipe can be purchased at builder's supply stores and is cut for free!)
183. My PVC pipe can become a palm tree that we can stick brightly colored letters to when I read *Chica Boom*, or it can hold my frog umbrella to protect me against the "water splashes" of the pond creatures; it's a beanstalk, a tower or whatever I need to help enhance a story. Decorate the base in a creative manner.
184. When reading animal stories have a group of children be the dogs, pigs, cows or whatever. When you say the line have the children make the appropriate animal sound.
185. Brag Bracelets are great listening incentives. I add a piece of clip art and a saying to a "ruler-width" slip of paper. I make a "master" of that bracelet by gluing 5 or 6 to a page. I run them off on colored paper. For example, when reading a dinosaur book I had T. Rex on either end of the strip. In the middle was written:
I was a dino-mite listener today!
- ❖ I fasten the brag bracelet around a child's wrist with a piece of scotch tape. They enjoy wearing them and communicating with parents what they did that day. I encourage them to try and re-tell the story.
186. If I need some one-on-one time with a child or some prep time after story hour, I pass out a picture to color, dot-to-dot or other skill sheet associated with the story. I file these

alphabetically according to category themes. i.e., animals, dinosaurs, colors, alphabet etc. Sometimes I'll have them do a mini booklet of the same reading theme or "We're on a roll" dice game. They are all quickie fill-in's after story time that I don't have to be in charge of.

187. I sometimes ask students to try and sound out the title, author, or illustrator instead of me reading it. If we have read an author before, it is fun to do a Venn diagram of the different books. This works great with parodies as well. A fun way I do diagramming is with hula-hoops. I rest them in the chalk sill or put them on the floor.
188. Tape your students reading a story. They love to hear how "different" they sound. This is a great reading incentive and can be sent home with a message to the parents, as an alternative to notes home. What a great keepsake their young voice will be to share with their own children someday.
189. Half man/half woman, half young/half old, half witch/half princess, half human/half animal are all great "half" costumes. The left side is one, the right another. Turn sideways to make the change as you read.
190. The Front and Back of you can also be two different characters. Simply read forwards as one character, then turn around and read in a different voice, with that costume backwards.
191. I spray painted half of a crocheted shawl black while the other half remained white. This becomes my "quick change" when I tell the story *Miss Nelson Is Missing*. When I'm the mean Ms. Viola Swamp I twirl the shawl around to the black side. When sweet Miss Nelson speaks I'm wearing white. I even made a purple and black "cameo" button with Viola's picture on it. I wear this pinned to the center. A wooden ruler and a paper airplane complete my ensemble. Just these few simple props add so much to the story.

I also purchased 4 skirts that were drastically reduced! One set was a black floral print, the other set beige with a similar print. I cut the buttons off to open up the skirts and sewed a black one to a beige one. One set I wear as a cape, the other as a skirt. You can change both, or become adept at turning the cape into a skirt and then back again when you change characters. Using skirts is an easy way to make capes. This is now a great costume for the evil queen or witch and the good princess etc. Practice twirling to the other side with somewhat of a flourish. It doesn't matter that you are "changing" in

front of the students; you will not lose the affect of the story, but only add to the telling. The y will have their eyes glued to you and be enthralled. Practice makes perfect quick-change techniques.

192. I like to have a reading corner. I have mats or carpet squares for the children to sit on. You can laminate large sheets of construction paper and each child can decorate their own “magic carpet” to ride on for the next reading adventure. You can make “fun walls” by suspending two dowels from the ceiling and draping an old sheet over them; this creates a tent-like appearance. Bookshelves as walls, also make a cool cubby.
193. Plastic sand toys are sometimes great story props. If you’re reading a beach story have your props or story starters in a sand pail. Put your flannel board pieces in that. Hot glue some shells to sticks to use as story-prompts. I have a red plastic barefoot print. I use it when I read Dr. Seuss’ *Foot Book*. Sand molds are also perfect for Jell-o as a special treat.
194. When I read Seuss’ *Foot Book* I have children lay on the floor. For little ones I go over which is right and which is left. I then have them raise their left/right foot/feet and have them do different things like shake, twist, kick, etc with their feet while I read the story.
195. If you want to take the time, have the children take off their shoes. As an additional activity you could have two teams. One team has one pile of shoes, the other the next pile. After the story have a relay race of which team can get their feet shod the fastest. One student from each team “races” to find their shoes in the pile, they put them on as quickly as possible and then tag the next player in line and so on.
196. Star students have the option to bring in a book to read or share, or choose one for me to read.
197. I plan tons of reading fun during March is reading Month.
198. To celebrate Dr. Seuss’ birthday, I do a week-long Dr. Seuss theme during the first week of March; with fun activities, games, trivia and stories. www.randomhouse.com/seussville is a great Internet cite. I wear a “cat in the hat” hat with a red felt bow tie and a black jumper that I have appliquéd with Seuss stuff. Your students can also make paper cat hats out of red and white construction paper with paper plates for rims. (See Photo in my Classroom section)

199. When you read stories with vehicles in them, have the children become that vehicle and fly, rumble, choo-choo, or drive back to their seats. During the story they can make appropriate vrrrooom or putt-putt, chug-a-lug noises.
200. Make up motions and movements to repetitive text, much like you do when you sing songs like “Wheels on the bus go round and round”. Ask the children’s input for new ideas.
201. It’s not that hard to take a standard-well known song, and change the verse to fit a story that you just read. It gets the kids up and active after sitting. After my dinosaur story I adapted “Wheels On the Bus” to “All Around the Swamp.”

- ❖ “The T. Rex’s jaw goes chomp, chomp, chomp ...all around the swamp.
The Pterodactyl’s wings go flap, flap, flap...all around the swamp.
The Brontosaurus’ feet go stomp, stomp, stomp...all around the swamp!”

We stomp back to our desks. Children make the noise and movement as they go back to their seats. For “all around the swamp”, they can turn in a circle or they can make a circular motion with their arm, hand, or finger. When I do color books we sing “If you know your colors clap your hands”, or “If you’re wearing red clap your hands.” After I read Jan Berenstain’s *Bear’s On Wheels* we sing, “The wheels on my bike go round and round all the way to school.” The ideas are endless! Easy...and a lot of fun!

202. Don’t buy an expensive flannel board; make one. Here’s how:
- ❖ Cover an old bulletin board with black flannel (Lay on an easel or in the chalk sill)
 - ❖ Cover a Tri-fold cardboard (\$7.00 at most teacher stores. Lots of teachers use them for science centers) (This is freestanding and nice on a table)
 - ❖ Masking tape looped around your hand cleans up the fuzzies
 - ❖ If you have white boards you can use magnet strip and forego a flannel board. Magnets will adhere to the white board. A peel and stick roll is less expensive. (Make sure you experiment with how much it takes to hold up a picture.)
 - ❖ Cut up and laminate old books or extra copies
 - ❖ Stick Velcro (prickly side) onto the backs of the pictures and you have a great flannel board story.

- ❖ **(TIP:** Unpeel entire strip and then cut. This saves a lot of time. Goo-gone cleans up your scissors.)
- ❖ Pass out pictures to students, they come up and put on the board when you read that part
- ❖ Type up the text
- ❖ Number the pictures on the back for easy ordering
- ❖ Put Velcro on both sides if there's a picture on each side. Just flip for the next page. Number them 2a & 2b.

203. Some Activities you can do with flannel boards:

- ❖ Put pictures in the correct sequence
- ❖ Number the order
- ❖ Label (colors, main characters etc. with correct words/names)
- ❖ Mix up the text and put in order. Time it (Beat the Clock, for older students)

❖ **TIPS:**

- Scotch tape the sides of file folders to hold your laminated pieces.
- Store little pieces in envelopes inside the folders.
- Keep a copy of the script to refresh comprehension.
- Keep a separate alphabetical file of all your storytelling pieces
- A plastic crate works great.
- You can keep worksheets, pictures to color, or anything else that went with that story--in file folders behind the pocket.
- Paperclip your master to the back of the folder so you always have a copy.

❖ **Books I want to do:**

204. The Mark V is an Ellison die cutting machine that is great for "rolling" long pieces, borders and large 8x10 cuts rather than pressing. This machine is perfect for cutting a piece of felt. You can do 100's of flannel shapes for your flannel boards. A must is a set of animals and multi-racial children. If you study continents, countries or states cut them out in felt and use your felt storytelling board to review as well as make up a story!

205. I keep laminated cut-up "stories" for felt boards in file-folder pockets. Stories are alphabetical according to theme or season. i.e., fall or fairy tales etc.

206. Scan, Xerox, or cut up extra pictures in your stories, number the backs. Laminate them and use them to re-tell the story on a felt board. Pass out the pictures to each child and have them put the pictures on the felt board when you come to that illustration. Use it for sequencing and summarizing afterwards.
207. If you have a long story or your laminated pictures are too large to fit in the file-folders ask a pizza parlor if you could have a few clean boxes. They make perfect storage for over-sized flannel board pieces!
208. Lisps, stuttering, clearing throat, sniffing, crying, etc. can all be added to delineate a different character.
209. Perfect a scream, sneeze, cough, and witch's cackle.
210. Fear, anger, crabbiness, sadness, happiness, as well as young and old, all sound different...work on their differences for an easy variety of voice changes.
211. Slow, fast, slurred, soft, whispered, loud, rambunctious are also easy variations.
212. Ask students if they have any ideas of how a character should sound.
213. Re-read the story giving parts to the children. Tell them you want them to think of an appropriate voice and practice using inflection.
214. When doing voices do not feel stupid. Think of all the times you've listened to an adept storyteller and were amazed at how they changed and adapted their voice. You didn't think they sounded stupid--you were amazed and impressed! Get past the feeling of foolish, and go beyond, into the awesome animation of it all.
215. Photographs of your students make wonderful illustrations for a book that your students create, write and share with another class. You can laminate and bind these and keep in a special library. Make one for every year you teach.
216. Take a snapshot of each child's head, laminate and glue to a Popsicle stick. When you are reading a story about children "they" can be the characters.

217. Sometimes I substitute different names, dates and places into my stories. I use my student's names and things they are familiar with. i.e., any stories about school I sub in my name for the teacher's name. If it's about a school it becomes our school, etc. The children seem to perk up more and get "into" the story more.
218. Make some great and easy costumes or just fun apparel to wear seasonally, with pretty fabric and some "No Sew" or "OK to WASH-IT" by Aleene's glue company. Cut out desired fabric and "glue" to a jumper, vest, blue jean skirt or shirt. Let dry 24 hours. I finish the edges by putting a line of puffy paint around the entire thing. Wash cold water on gentle cycle.
219. Some puppets are basically "heads" or a bust of the entire animal. To add variety and make a change take a square of fabric, a handkerchief or bandana and put a good portion of one of the corners inside the head. Drape the rest around your hand and wrist. It will appear that the puppet is now wearing a skirt.
220. Lycra head puppets or stuffed animals, even ones made of felt or nylon can have their emotions/personalities change. On my Muppet-type puppet head, I have extra felt cutouts of eyes, tongue, moustache, beard, frowning eyebrows, hair, a few tears etc. They have just a snip of the scratchy part of the Velcro on the back and adhere easily to my puppet head. This is great when I want to tell "feeling" or "different emotion" stories.
221. Make a non-puppet head to do this with, by stuffing an old nylon stocking. Stuff it with more old nylons. Another option is to insert a large Styrofoam ball. If you want a head that's not so round use one of those medium Mylar balloons that come on a stick and "never" deflate. Cut off the legs of the nylons, tie a knot where the legs used to be and stuff away. The waist part of the pantyhose becomes the "neck" that is then glued to a paint stick. If you can see some printing from the balloon through the nylon, just add another nylon over the top of that one. Drape "neck" with a piece of fabric. Store the "extra faces" in a baggie under the "skirt". Tie neck with a bow. Different colored pantyhose can denote ethnicity. Cover the knot at the top with a children's size cap.
222. You could also have different hats to denote the seasons. (Baseball cap for summer, knit cap for winter etc.) Collect some professional hats and have your puppet head be a fireman, police officer, pirate, chef, nurse, railroad engineer etc.

223. There's nothing quite like going outside on a beautiful spring, summer, or fall day when you read a story about that particular season. This can be an incentive-earned treat for special behavior.
224. A fun extension after a story is to make up a new ending, or add another page. This is especially easy with stories like *Brown Bear*. Have the children add another animal and what he saw. Sometimes I read a story and the children don't like the ending, we re-write a new "happily-ever-after" one. ☺ These make great writing extensions for older students.
225. For practice on "recalling" or to test sequencing & comprehension, I play "what happened next?" Say a line and call on a child to add the next, they call on the next child who relates the next section/sentence and so on.
226. Because my students need to know "Concepts of print" as a report card standard we review, cover-beginning-middle-end, characters, setting, author & illustrator during the beginning and end of the story.
227. Create a story web or weave a plot. I have a big ball of fabric that was sewn into strips for a rug. I have children gather in a circle and retell a story, share, or tell me the next sequence of events. When they have shared something they roll the ball to someone else. We make a story web. For older students you can also relate it "backwards" to rewind the ball. This is fun when you are doing numbers or the alphabet with younger children. Rug yarn, string or anything not too knot-able is great to use.
228. *Inspirations* is also a computer program that is fabulous for creating story webs with technology.
229. As a fun alternative for discussion, I toss a beach ball around. Students tell me the main character, plot, or whatever I am looking for, and then toss the ball to another student.
230. Bag your small finger puppets in Zip Lock Storage bags.
231. So that I remember all of my props needed for a story, I list the "ingredients" for that story on an index card and glue it to the book. I have a quick checklist of all that I need at a glance.
232. I keep all my props in Zip Locks (if they fit) and store them alphabetically in large file boxes. By having all the same size and

type boxes, things look neater and stack so much better. I label the fronts A-D, Summer, Winter, Fall etc. Whatever works for you.

233. I put a sheet of fabric softener in the boxes with my puppets. They smell “April fresh.”
234. I have so many puppets that it’s easy for me to forget what’s hiding at the bottom of some box. A picture of my Puppet-family gives me a quick consensus, and jogs my memory. It’s also great hanging up in your classroom, or on a poster to let children know what you’ve got! (See photo of my classroom menagerie under [My Classroom](#))
235. One of the most versatile story helpers is a pair of wiggle eyes. They slide on to my middle finger and become anything from a worm or snake to a frog or a crocodile! (.59c at most novelty shops.)
- 236.** When I read an ocean story or one with rain, or a spooky damp-dungeon story, or a dinosaur story where we’re in the swamp, I “mist” my students with a blue bottle labeled “Splash”. It’s just a mist, not like a squirt gun, and is a wonderful special affect! ***If you want to be “misted” tilt your face up and close your eyes.*** And almost everyone does, especially in September after they’ve run around at recess and come in all hot, red-faced and sweaty.
237. Try to name your puppets. It makes them “real”. Stumped for a name? Ask your students; they have great imaginations! You may even want to have a contest to name your newest member.
238. Tuck bells, or small objects that will make a noise--inside the rubber heads of some of your smaller puppets. I buy plastic or rubber tub toys and cut a hole in the bottom. Insert a bell or some “noisy” beads or seeds that will “rattle and roll” when you shake your puppet.
239. Cut a cardboard circle the size of the “inside neck”. I put a slit in the center of the circle and insert a Popsicle stick. I then glue the neck hole shut with the cardboard circle. I can hold the puppet by the stick. Hot glue a swatch of appropriate color material around the outside neck. Just fold a top-hem down so you don’t have a ragged edge, pinking shear-cut the bottom hem of the material; this covers my hand while I hang on to the stick.

240. There are all sorts of painted wooden objects that you can hot glue to a Popsicle stick and use as number, shape or color paddles. I.e., I glued a little wooden ladybug on a wooden leaf to a Popsicle stick. I numbered them 1-10 with 2 or 3 sets. I can sing songs like *1 little 2 little 3 little Ladybugs*". The children with that number holds up their ladybug stick. One of the sticks has 10 tiny ladybugs glued to it, the others only have one, but are numbered differently. I keep the sticks in a ladybug "purse" that I got at a garage sale for 25c. I numbered index cards with the number and the word (1 one) and put one ladybug sticker for each number on the card. While we sing, I hold up the card and they hold up their sticks. I use them after I read ladybug stories like *Grouchy Ladybug* or *I Need A Bug Hug*.

241. There are giant puzzles available that are fun to put together after reading the matching story. For example *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and the *Clifford* stories etc. all have puzzles that match. I also have ones with dinosaurs, the alphabet, animals, numbers and colors. You can also make your own.

Many books/magazines have long "murals" that "pull out". If you don't find any of those have each child color/draw a picture and put it together in mural fashion. Laminate them and cut it up in puzzle-shapes. Make sure you have enough pieces so each child can participate. This could be a mural-scene of the entire story.

After you read the story put the puzzle together. Here's how I do it: Because these big puzzles are a bit more complicated for my students to put together at the beginning of the year, I put them together and then number them in one color marker from 1-10 and continue numbering them in another color from 1- however many more big pieces I have. I have my students stand in a circle and ask: "Who has the blue number 1. They put that piece on the floor and then blue #2 adds their piece and we go on til we have all 10 blue numbers then we do the red numbers 'til the puzzle is put together. I write the color number order on the inside lid of the box.

242. Be on the look out for regular 9x12 size puzzles as well; many of them are story-related. I have one of the alphabet. I "laminated" each letter with clear Contac paper. (You can buy clear Contac paper by the roll at stores like Meijers or teacher stores. It's less expensive, and you can do large items.) Before I read the alphabet story I give a letter to each child. While we are reading they hold up their letter when I come to it. Afterwards, we put the puzzle together and then sing the alphabet song when we are

finished. I have a puzzle of the *101 Dalmatians* that I use when I read that story the day after we celebrate 100 days at school!

243. I scan the pieces and parts of stories like *The Jacket I wear in the Snow*, *The Bag I'm Taking To Grandma's* and *The Dress I'll Wear To the Party*. They are perfect "sequencing" activities for my flannel board. I literally "pack up" the bag I'm taking to grama's". I also dress a child with the props for *The Dress I'll Wear To the Party*. (*See photo in February for 100 Day*) I found a white sleeveless dress like the one in the story and I simply sketched the design on the front and painted it with acrylic paints. It really wow's the children when I show them the book, and then pull out my dress. I slip it on over the child's outfit and let her be the main character in the story. She puts on the shiny black shoes, the 4 black buttons, & " the purple bow ", I squirt some Loves Baby Soft perfume on anyone who wants a squirt, etc. It's all tucked in my mesh laundry bag, and passed out to individual children who help dress a little girl in my class. It's a cute way to tell the story. Then we undress her when mom basically says "No way" to wearing her things to the birthday party. Children then tell me the "backwards" or "beginning" sequence and the dressed child can now "undress" while someone puts the props back in the bag.
244. Whenever I find a poem that "matches" a story I am reading I type it up or Xerox a copy and put it inside those particular books. I love poetry and I feel it's important to share poems with children as well as stories. The one I include with *The Dress I Am Wearing To The Party* is "*I Look Pretty*" By Eloise Greenfield, from her book *Honey, I Love* [Harper Collins 1972].

Mama's shiny purple coat
Giant-sized shoulder bag to tot
Tall, tall shoes and pantyhose
Big straw hat with shiny bows
I look pretty
I float
I smile
I pose

Once you start looking through your poetry books you will find many that are appropriate for your stories. Tucking them inside the books keeps them organized so you're not looking for a needle in a haystack later.

245. You can purchase white-mesh laundry bags at most Dollar Stores. They come in large and small sizes. The big ones are perfect to hold all the props I need for a particular story with enough room for the book. I face the cover so that I can easily see what story is in the bag.

This saves me tons of time when I'm traveling or even just in the classroom. No need to search through your boxes. I do this with my "favorites". When I'm doing a workshop I just put the bags in rows in a huge suitcase on wheels. It's easy to load in the car and haul to a classroom. I lay the bags out in the order I will be reading the stories. As you finish the story toss the items back in the bag so you don't have a huge mess to sort out later. If I have tiny items I put them in a Ziploc baggy and put that in the mesh bag. These bags also work great for stories you read as a theme.

For example I keep all my "hug" books in one bag, because I seldom read them separately. I can see through them and they are big enough to hold the large picture books. i.e., *For Brown Bear Brown Bear What Do You See?* I have the large picture book, a big brown bear puppet, a baggie filled with flannel board pieces, and several file folder games. Everything I need when I read this story, the puppets, games, prizes treats for the children etc. are in this laundry bag.

I keep all my "special" stories for a particular month in a cardboard file box marked September with all the special stories inside. I can usually fit 5-7 laundry bags in a box depending on what kind of "stuff" I have in the bags.

For example for September I have a laundry bag for *Miss Nelson is Missing*. I have a costume for me and the video in the bag as well as the sequel to the first book.

When I want to read the book, I simply lay the entire laundry bag on my rocking chair and I have everything I need for Story Time. When I'm done I just zip up the bag and toss it in the box for next year.

246. Large plastic zippered bags that blankets and comforters come in are great for story telling stuff too. They are durable and clear, and you can see at a glance what's in there! I use these for stories that have props too large to fit in the mesh bags.

247. Oriental Trading as well as Fun Express sell a cardboard palm tree. It's about 4 feet tall, and less than \$5. I took their brads

out and had it laminated. Put tabbed brads back in so you can fold for easy storage. This is the perfect “tree” for the story *Chicka Chicka Boom*.

I hot glued round black Velcro dots to the trunk and palm fronds. (With repeated use the glue will hold better than just using the self-stick) I Velcro the opposite side dots to brightly-colored magnetic plastic letters. You can get these at most Dollar Stores. Pass out a letter to each child. As you are reading the story...when that letter goes up the palm tree the child “sticks” his letter to the palm tree.

I also cut out 30 large and small palm leaves with the Ellison Die Cut machine. I had them laminated. I then stuck a set of the alphabet on grid-squares, cut and laminated them. Each child now has a set to arrange in all sorts of ways (depending on my lesson) Upper case (large leaf), lower case (small leaf).

248. When you are garage sailing or shopping and see something, start to ask yourself: “*What can I use this for? How could I use this to tell a story?*” Pretty soon you will have trained your mind to think creatively! The toy, pet, floral, linen, kitchen and baby department can all provide “storytelling treasures.” Long leafy garland are perfect for writing a story on, or pulling out of the change bag as a beanstalk. Cat and dog toys sometimes provide great finger puppets and noisemakers. Baby outfits on sale can be stuffed and turned into a life-sized child puppet. Wooden spoons are great for a magic recipe wand, and are super wooden head/face puppets. (Paint and you’re set.)

249. A box makes a great prop especially for stories like *The Berenstain’s Inside Outside Upside Down* I typed up the simple sentence script in cue card form and laminated them. I use these to tell the story. While I read, a student holds up the word cards and puts them on the flannel board. I also drew a big red arrow with the words: “This Side Up” just like the one in the story and glued that to one side of a cardboard box. (For protection, I put Contac paper over the box). (A large pair of wiggle eyes on the right hand side is a finishing touch!)

On the other side of the box I have the word “upside down” written on the box with all of the above now upside down. Inside the box, I have the word inside, and on another side I have the word outside, I have also labeled the box BOX. On the bottom of the box I have the title and authors of the book, and on the back I have “The end!” I typed all this in the **“STEAMER”** font. While I’m reading I have a child

show the box (like a book). Using the box, a child does the motions/directions that I'm reading. One child can do the entire story, or you can have several children take turns. You can review and go over the words by pointing to them on the box and flannel board. This is a fun alternative to the word wall. You could do the same thing with stories involving a gift, surprise package or birthday present.

250. You can do something similar with their book *Bears On Wheels* as well. Scan and laminate the bears and put them on real wheels from broken trikes, or on paper plates or some other wheels that you make. If you have one wheel with spokes you could clothespin the bears to the spokes. Read the page and then use the wheel(s) to enact what the written word says.

251. If you'd rather stick to paper wheels make some out of construction paper and laminate them. I had a picture of a wheel and scanned it then made 5 copies of the wheel. For the first five numerical sets. I cut 10 smaller black wheels out of construction paper for the rest of the story. I also made a total of 21 bears so that I could add bears as I read.

Each piece has a Velcro dot on the back for easy attaching to my flannel board. I took this concept a step farther by poking plastic-head thumbtacks into the front center of one of the large wheels. I then stuck the point into a flat wooden bead so that it was loose enough so that the wheel would spin. I then hot glued the bead to a large wooden heart and put a long strip of Velcro to the back. I can spin the wheel for added story telling finesse! It's also a great prop for singing "Wheels on the bus/bike."

"The wheels on my bike go round and round,
round and round.

The wheels on my bike go round and round all the way to
school...

all around the block, all the way back home,
all the way in the garage!"

252. You may want to keep some of your puppets in a trunk easily accessible, yet organized. A puppet place would be a great center for young children. After one of your stories you may want to pass out puppets and let the children re-tell a tale using the puppets.

253. I plan to have a Red Flyer coaster wagon handy with some of my larger puppets sitting in it. When it's a child's birthday they get

to ride in the wagon to lunch or any specials we have that day. This makes them feel like kings and queens!

254. An inexpensive, but very effective puppet “stage” is to simply buy a tension rod. Put the rod in the doorway and puppet away. Use some old curtains as the “skirting for the stage. Puppets can be shown above the rod, or in the middle where the curtains separate. Once in a while tell a story with your staged area rather than reading from your chair.
255. Sit on the floor with your children sometimes instead of sitting in your rocking chair.
256. I store my dry erase board, markers, clothespin clips, bookmarks, storytelling flashcards, magic erase boards and anything else related to storytelling in a basket or dump-display by my story telling chair.
257. Bookstores usually have “dumps”. These are cardboard displayers that hold books. Dumps add a creative touch to your classroom and double as a functional decoration. Many stores will save them for you if you just ask. Write your name and phone number on the back of the displayer or on a sticky note with “Save For:” written on it. With a little bit of effort and some imagination, you can do all kinds of things with them.
258. Use a “dump” to make a displayer that will help you with story telling.
Here’s an idea for a story telling displayer used as a teaching aid.

❖ **Functions:**

- Students anticipate and get excited.
- Who found the clue?
- What number book is today’s book? Teacher models the number on a dry erase board and student copies the numerical number and the word number on the hangtag. Students can count up to that number. Yesterday’s number was? Today’s number is? What do you think tomorrow’s number will be? (Teacher chooses a helper each day via Popsicle sticks conveniently stored on the displayer).
- What is the title of the book? Teacher or student writes it on a colored spine along with the number. Hang spines in a specific color pattern as a border around the room. You can stop when you have read 100 books as a special part of your 100-Day Celebration, or you can continue on through the year.

This does not have to be a book spine. It could be a circle or other shape that is added to a caterpillar or bookworm. By doing different shapes you could also reinforce that lesson. For older students as a 100-day “game” have them alphabetize the books. To save time, have them put the number on the book in alphabetical order rather than writing out each title.

- Ask students what the next color will be. (Can review colors, shapes and patterns). You can give each color a sound and have students clap/sound the pattern.
- Go over discussion cue cards: Author, illustrator, setting, characters, plot, moral etc. For older students you could do more advanced definitions. Is this real or make believe? (fiction/non-fiction)
- Make additional cue cards with vocabulary you want students to be familiar with.
- Reading stories is a great opportunity to go over rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia etc. Show the cue card the students will be learning/reinforcing and have them raise their hand when you come to a specific example of that word in the story; or wait ‘til after the story and discuss examples.

❖ **Organized:**

A display unit is with a pocket or shelf is extra “perfect” because it has the nice big holder in the middle. Look for a display with pockets or shelves so that it helps with storage.

- The book is laid out for the next day.
- Children get used to a routine.
- It helps you keep track of everything you need.
- Use it as an easel to prop up your flannel board.
- Hide your story apron, props, and/or snacks behind it. I put additional manila envelopes in the back for additional storage.
- A substitute can easily find things.

259. Another thing you can keep on/in your dump is an activity/movement story that you do before or after most of your readings. I like Sesame Street’s *Shake A Leg*. I cut up and laminated the pages. Before or sometimes after the story I have my students do the movements of the Shake A Leg story. I hold up the picture, say the movement, and the children do it. Wiggle your ears, pat your tummy, hop on one foot, make a muscle etc. You could make up your own picture/movement cards.

260. And finally, **MAGIC** adds zip to storytelling. But that my dear reader is another whole book!